

# Seattle 3-1-1

## Creating a Customer Centered Organization

Darby DuComb, Director  
Customer Service Bureau  
[darby.ducomb@seattle.gov](mailto:darby.ducomb@seattle.gov)  
206-684-8814





# Why has the Mayor proposed a 3-1-1 program for Seattle?

- Over 1,000 lines in the phone directory
- Long hold times and confusing message trees
- Frequent hand-offs from one agency to another—sometimes dropped
- No consistent hours, service standards, issue tracking
- Uneven support for non-English speakers
- The result: a system that frustrates City employees and frustrates our customers



## What we did.

- Identified the City's highest volume phone numbers
- Interviewed staff from 30 different City contact centers
- Researched what other cities are doing
- Interviewed staff from 4 other cities
- Visited contact centers in 3 other cities
- Surveyed Seattle residents



Here's what some of those cities told us:

- **Albuquerque:** "There is **more respect for city government** because people who used to be taking phone calls are now **providing direct service.**"
- **Austin:** "Gains in **accountability** and better overall **relationships with citizens.**"
- **Denver:** "**78% customer satisfaction**, which is a quantifiable benefit."
- **New York:** "Increased **access** for constituents and increased **accountability** for government."





We also surveyed Seattle residents. Here's what they told us.

- Having a **single phone number** for non-emergencies is a **good idea** (86%)
- Implementing such a system would be a **good use of tax dollars** (76%)
- However, over a third of Seattle residents say that they have had a problem, complaint, or service request that they did not report to the City because it was **too much trouble to figure out who to contact** (35%)
- 8% admitted calling 9-1-1 for non-emergency purposes.

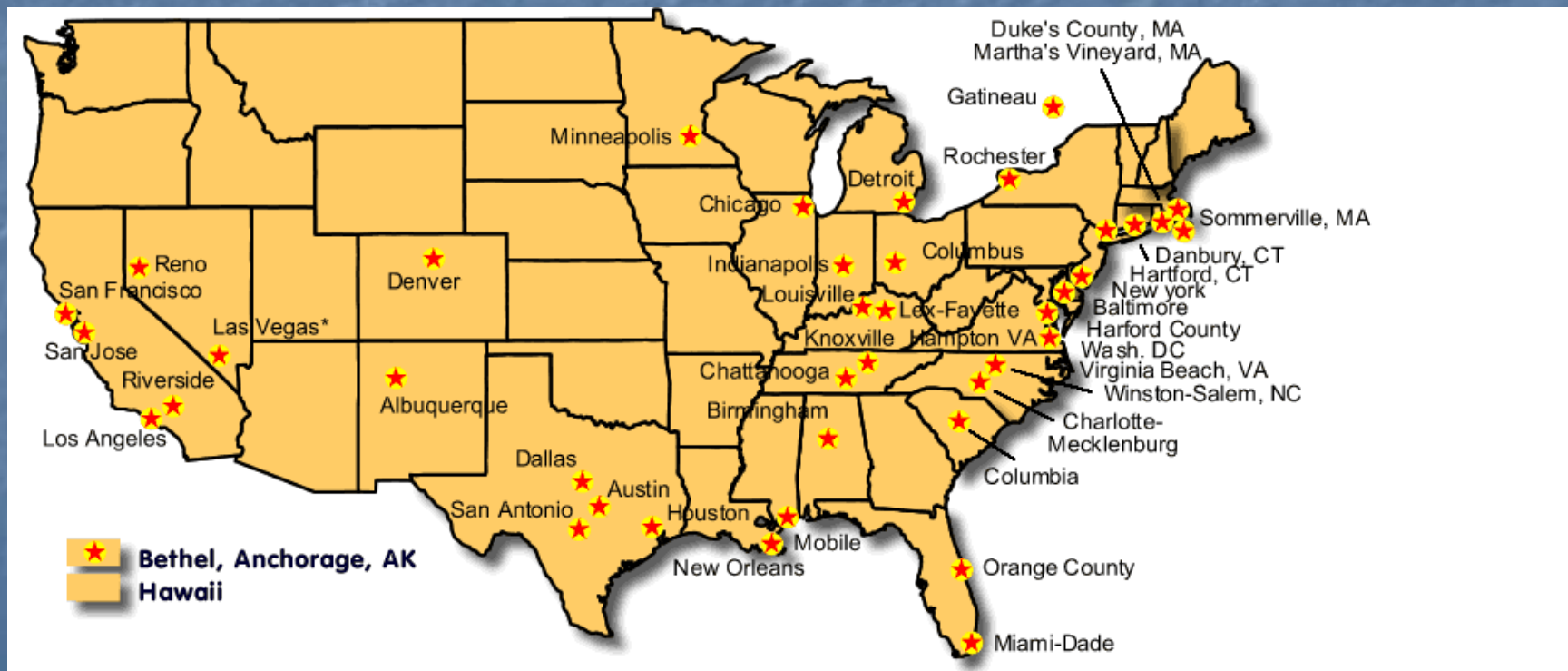


This confusion sometimes leads customers to call 9-1-1 for non-emergency issues.

- Seattle's December 14, 2006 Windstorm After-Action Report notes that "the vast majority of callers to 9-1-1...were reporting conditions or situations that were not appropriate for Fire or Police emergency response. We need another place to route these callers to free up the 9-1-1 trunks for true emergencies." (p. 49)



50 U.S. cities have implemented 3-1-1 programs or are planning 3-1-1 programs in response to these same problems.







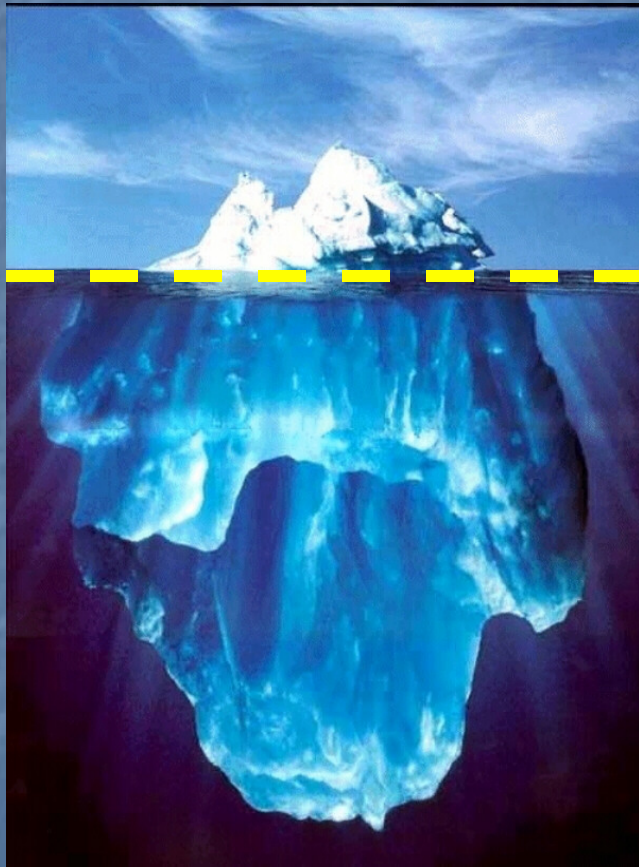
## The Mayor's proposal: a 3-1-1 program for Seattle.

- One easy-to-remember number to call for information, assistance, service
- Integrated service for multiple issues
- Extended hours of service and language support
- Consistent responses and service levels
- Service tracking and accountability
- Complete data for performance measurement and improvement





# 3-1-1 is much more than a phone number



- 3-1-1 call center to interact with customers
- Software to
  - Supply answers to frequent questions
  - Manage service requests
  - Track customer demands
  - Report on performance
- Improved business practices
  - Re-designed work flows
  - Data to allocate resources and monitor performance



# Service Examples

- Abandoned vehicles
- Animal control
- Emergency management support for non-911 services
- Graffiti removal
- Housing, zoning, and construction enforcement
- Illegal dumping
- General information requests
- Noise
- Park maintenance
- Pedestrian safety
- Potholes
- Senior services
- Signage
- Special events (holidays, civic events)
- Street light outages
- Street trees and other vegetation management issues
- Surface water and drainage issues
- Tourism and visitor information
- Traffic problems
- Translation services
- Utility information and non-complex service orders



## The Schedule:

- 2007:
  - Budget approval
  - Acquire 3-1-1 number
- 2008:
  - Design the processes and work flows
  - Select Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software
  - Budget Approval
- 2009:
  - Implement CRM Software
  - Locate and build out space
  - Hire and train staff
- 2010
  - Soft Launch





In summary, a 3-1-1 program  
does 3 things

- 3-1-1 makes government more accessible
- 3-1-1 makes government more transparent
- 3-1-1 makes government more accountable

Thank you for your interest in making city  
government more responsive to its customers.





# How can you help make 3-1-1 a reality in Seattle?

- Get it funded! Let the Seattle City Council know that you support a 3-1-1 program for Seattle!